



Vijaya Gadde, Legal, Public Policy & Trust and Safety Lead  
Laura Culbertson, Head of US Public Policy  
Twitter  
1355 Market Street, #900  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Via USPS

May 9, 2022

Dear Ms. Gadde & Ms. Culbertson:

On behalf of the Center for Inquiry (“CFI”) and its program the Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science (“RDFRS”), we are writing to you to request that you end the suspension of the Twitter account owned by the group Atheist Republic (@AtheistRepublic) or, at the very least, provide the group with information as to why it has been suspended.

CFI exists to foster a secular society based on reason, science, freedom of inquiry, and humanist values. Through education, publication, litigation, and lobbying it seeks to ensure equality for nonbelievers across the world and the defense of Enlightenment values. Through its program Secular Rescue, CFI has assisted and even saved the lives of many atheist bloggers and writers whose safety has been placed in danger by their open lack of belief.<sup>1</sup>

For many in the atheist community worldwide, the internet—and Twitter in particular—is a lifeline. It permits those in areas where public displays of atheism would be met by hostility, violence, or criminal sanctions to participate in and gather the benefits of community.

Since April 2, 2022, Atheist Republic has been unable to access its account on a global basis, and all attempts by them to determine the cause of this have been met by silence from Twitter. When an individual tries to access Atheist Republic’s Twitter page, that person sees the message “*Account Suspended: Twitter suspends accounts that violate the Twitter rules.*”

Atheist Republic can only conclude that this global situation has some relation to the legal situation in India, where as part of a matter currently pending before the Delhi High Court, *Aditya Singh Deshwal v. Union of India & Ors*, that court, on October 29, 2021, issued an order directing Twitter, Inc., to take down four URLs, three of which were tweets by Atheist Republic. Later, on March 28, 2022, following the rejoinder filed by the petitioner in the above case, Twitter took down two further URLs that were Atheist Republic tweets. The six URLs removed are listed in the document titled Exhibit A.

On March 27, 2022, Twitter informed Atheist Republic that it had received a court order from the Delhi High Court, and “*in order to comply with Twitter’s obligations under India’s local laws, we have withheld this content in India.*” referencing the two tweets removed on March 28. This communication referenced only this content and mentioned removal only in India. Within a week, however, and without any further communication, Twitter suspended Atheist Republic’s Twitter account worldwide.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://secular-rescue.org/>

Atheist Republic's Twitter account has in excess of 138,000 followers.<sup>2</sup> Its freedom to communicate with fellow nonbelievers across the world has been cast aside by Twitter, and Twitter has not even told it why. If this is indeed the result of the situation in the India, Twitter appears to be taking the side of one party in an as yet undecided court case. Moreover, Twitter is taking an action that threatens all atheist groups and individuals. To religious extremists, the existence of atheists is insulting and harmful. A statement by a nonbeliever that there is no deity is blasphemous to many religious individuals, and they will often seek to use the law to prevent such a statement. While such legal intervention is prohibited in the United States by the First Amendment, multiple countries across the world have blasphemy laws.<sup>3</sup> In some countries, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, blasphemy (and apostasy) are punishable by death. Twitter cannot allow itself to assist in the censorship of the nonreligious by accepting complaints from religious groups regarding offense caused by atheist tweets at face value.

We are therefore requesting that, without delay, Twitter do the following:

- Restore Atheist Republic's access to its Twitter account;
- Inform Atheist Republic what portions of Twitter's terms of service and rules it has violated;
- Allow Atheist Republic to contest whatever claims are made against it; and
- On an ongoing basis, develop a structure to ensure that unfair and unreasonable claims from religious organizations and individuals cannot be permitted to silence atheist and nonbeliever accounts without recourse or process.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions. Please contact our General Counsel, Nicholas J. Little, at [nlittle@centerforinquiry.org](mailto:nlittle@centerforinquiry.org).

Sincerely,



Richard Dawkins FRS,  
Board Member, Center for Inquiry; Founder, Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason & Science



Robyn Blumner,  
President and CEO, Center for Inquiry

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<sup>2</sup> Atheist Republic's account has been suspended before, in November 2021, for alleged repeated copyright violations that were found to be groundless, and the suspension was lifted later that month.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/01/25/four-in-ten-countries-and-territories-worldwide-had-blasphemy-laws-in-2019-2/>